

Readings for Sunday, September 6, 2020

The Fourteenth Sunday After Pentecost



AS WE GATHER

“Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” Jesus’ disciples asked. Our Lord responded by welcoming a child into His midst. “Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” Children are highly valued by our gracious God because they are completely dependent. On their own, they have nothing, yet they need everything. This is true for all of us in our relationship with God! On our own, we have only our sinful, broken lives and are unable to please God and fulfill His commands. Yet, in Jesus Christ, we possess everything we need! Forgiveness of sins and the guarantee of life forever with God are freely given to those who turn from their sin and receive the forgiveness earned by our crucified and risen Savior. In Jesus, we are, like children, completely dependent. We have nothing to offer, yet everything we need is ours to receive from the gracious hands of our Savior.

Old Testament Reading, *Ezekiel 33:7-9*

(The watchman warns the wicked to turn from his way.)

7“So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. 8If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. 9But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.”

Epistle Reading, *Romans 13:1-10*

(Love is the fulfilling of the law.)

1Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. 2Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. 3For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, 4for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. 5Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. 6For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. 7Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

8Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 10Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Holy Gospel, *Matthew 18:1-20*

(Jesus calls the children of God to humility and repentance.)

1At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" 2And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them 3and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5“Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, 6but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

7“Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes! 8And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. 9And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.

10“See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven. 11For the Son of Man came to save the lost. 12What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? 13And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. 14So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

15“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. 18Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 19Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. 20For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”